



Voices of the American Past

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their goal is a different question. Of course they achieved some effect. They preoccupied our country for 14 months with an agonizing, frustrating situation that we would have preferred not to have lived through. But I do not see that as a benefit that offsets the costs which their country paid. Maybe they do. I would doubt it.

MR. MICA.

The statement is that the terrorists have learned a lesson. Their goals, as you stated, were very finite; apology, return of some wealth, but instead they have achieved a stability that may not have ever been. It may fall tomorrow. Have they come out better, and have they really learned a lesson because we protracted these negotiations to the extent we did?

MR. MUSKIE.

You speak of the incident and possible repetition of it as involving the same people. I do not know whether the same militants would try the same thing if we should reestablish diplomatic relations with Iran but with respect to acts of irrationality surely we live in a world in which we have seen it possible for people to create disruption, to threaten the peace, to disrupt communities. We have said it here in Washington. I saw nobody arguing we should not negotiate their release and the release was negotiated, as you can remember very well.... But the fact is Iran now is busy seeking to repair the rend in its relations, economic, diplomatic and otherwise with the rest of the world because it has come to learn it cannot live in a world alone. It lives in an interdependent world and if it fails to recognize that fact, Iran's real interests are seriously impacted. I think that is the lesson. Whether it would be a lesson terrorist minded people will absorb in the future I surely would not guarantee....

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The Christian Right's Call to Action (1980)

In the late 1970s, as an evangelical movement swept the country, some people believed the United States was experiencing a religious revival comparable to the earlier Great Awakenings. Membership in churches rose, and large numbers of Americans considered themselves

to be "born again." Evangelical ministers established their own radio and television stations and created their own religious programming, such as Pat Robertson's 700 Club or Jim Baker's PTL (*Praise the Lord*), to reach an audience beyond the church pulpit. Many evangelicals broadened their message to a crusade against the evils of modern society. The Reverend Jerry Falwell of Virginia was among the most active in waging a "war against sin." In 1979 he founded the Moral Majority to provide political clout for the so-called Religious or Christian Right in their efforts to remove what they perceived as sinful portions of modern culture. Excepted here is Falwell's call for a Bible-based, moral America and a justification for the Moral Majority.

Questions to Consider

1. According to Jerry Falwell, what are the major problems facing American society?
2. According to Jerry Falwell, what are the purposes of Moral Majority?
3. For what reasons is Falwell so pessimistic about the future of America?
4. What is the significance of this evangelical movement?
5. How is Reverend Falwell's message similar to that found in "Religion and the Scopes Trial" (Document 176)?

I believe that Americans want to see this country come back to basics, back to values, back to biblical morality, back to sensibility, and back to patriotism. Americans are looking for leadership and guidance. It is fair to ask the question, "If 84 per cent of the American people still believe in morality, why is America having such internal problems?" We must look for the answer to the highest places in every level of government. We have a lack of leadership in America. But Americans have been lax in voting in and out of office the right and the wrong people.

My responsibility as a preacher of the Gospel is one of influence, not of control, and that is the responsibility of each individual citizen. Through the ballot box Americans must provide for strong moral leadership at every level. If our country will get back on the track in sensibility and moral sanity, the crises that I have herein mentioned will work out in the course of time and with God's blessings....

While sins of America are certainly many, let us summarize the five major problems that have political consequences, political implications that moral Americans need to be ready to face.

1. **ABORTION**—Nine men, by majority vote, said it was okay to kill unborn children. In 1973, two hundred million Americans and four hundred thousand pastors stood by and did little to stop it. Every year millions of babies are murdered in America, and most of us want to forget that it is happening....

2. **HOMOSEXUALITY**—In spite of the fact that the Bible clearly designates this sin as an act of a “reprobate mind” for which God “gave them up” (Rm. 1:26–28), our government seems determined to legalize homosexuals as a legitimate “minority.” The National Civil Rights Act of 1979 (popularly referred to as the Gay Rights Bill) would give homosexuals the same benefits as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, meaning they could not be discriminated against by any employing body because of “sexual preference.”...
3. **PORNOGRAPHY**—The four-billion-dollar-per-year pornographic industry is probably the most devastating moral influence of all upon our young people. Sex magazines deliberately increase the problem of immoral lust and thus provoke increased adultery, prostitution, and sexual child abuse....
4. **HUMANISM**—The contemporary philosophy that glorifies man as man, apart from God, is the ultimate outgrowth of evolutionary science and secular education. In his new book *The Battle for the Mind*, Dr. Tim LaHaye argues that the full admission of humanism as the religion of secular education came after prayer and Bible reading were excluded from our public schools. Ultimately, humanism rests upon the philosophy of existentialism, which emphasizes that one's present existence is the true meaning and purpose of life. Existentialism has become the religion of the public schools. Applied to psychology, it postulates a kind of moral neutrality that is detrimental to Christian ethics. In popular terminology it explains, “Do your own thing,” and “If it feels good, do it!” It is an approach to life that has no room for God and makes man the measure of all things.
5. **THE FRACTURED FAMILY**—With a skyrocketing divorce rate, the American family may well be on the verge of extinction in the next twenty years. Even the recent White House Conference on Families has called for an emphasis on diverse family forums (common-law, communal, homosexual, and transsexual “marriages”). The Bible pattern of the family has been virtually discarded by modern American society. Our movies and magazines have glorified the physical and emotional experience of sex without love to the point that most Americans do not even consider love to be important at all anymore. Bent on self-gratification, we have reinterpreted our moral values in light of our immoral life styles. Since the family is the basic unit of society, and since the family is desperately in trouble today, we can conclude that our society itself is in danger of total collapse....

To change America we must be involved, and this includes three areas of political action:

1. REGISTRATION

A recent national poll indicated that eight million American evangelicals are not registered to vote. I am convinced that this is one of the major sins of the church today. Until concerned Christian citizens become registered voters there is very little that we can do to change the tide of political influence on the social issues in our nation. Those who object to Christians being involved in the political process are ultimately objecting to Christians being involved in the social process....

2. INFORMATION

Many moral Americans are unaware of the real issues affecting them today. Many people do not know the voting record of their congressman and have no idea how he is representing them on political issues that have moral implications. This is one of the major reasons why we have established the Moral Majority organization. We want to keep the public informed on the vital moral issues. The Moral Majority, Inc., is a nonprofit organization, with headquarters in Washington, D.C. Our goal is to exert a significant influence on the spiritual and moral direction of our nation by: (a) mobilizing the grassroots of moral Americans in one clear and effective voice; (b) informing the moral majority what is going on behind their backs in Washington and in state legislatures across the country; (c) lobbying intensely in Congress to defeat left-wing, social-welfare bills that will further erode our precious freedom; (d) pushing for positive legislation such as that to establish the Family Protection Agency, which will ensure a strong, enduring America; and (e) helping the moral majority in local communities to fight pornography, homosexuality, the advocacy of immorality in school textbooks, and other issues facing each and every one of us....

3. MOBILIZATION

The history of the church includes the history of Christians' involvement in social issues....

I am convinced that we need a spiritual and moral revival in America if America is to survive the twentieth century. The time for action is now; we dare not wait for someone else to take up the banner of righteousness in our generation. We have already waited too long....

Right living must be re-established as an American way of life. We as American citizens must recommit ourselves to the faith of our fathers and to the premises and moral foundations upon which this country was established. Now is the time to begin calling America back to God, back to the Bible, back to morality! We must be willing to live by the moral convictions that we claim to believe. There is no way that we will ever be willing to die for something for which we are not willing to live. The authority of Bible morality must once again be recognized as the legitimate guiding principle of our nation. Our love for our fellow man must ever be grounded in the truth and never be allowed to blind us from the truth that is the basis of our love for our fellow man.